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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	USSR (Komi ASSR)	REPORT	25X1
SUBJECT	Conditions at Vorkuta	DATE DISTR.	21 December 1956
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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

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1. [] containing information on conditions at Vorkuta (N 67-30, E 64-00). report []
2. Included in the report is brief information on the power plant and the coal mines at Vorkuta; population; the political climate; living conditions; and climate.

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STATE	X ARMY	X NAVY	X AIR	X FBI	AEC			
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Attachment

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Vorbitsa - early 1955

1. In early 1955 about 25 shafts were producing in the Vorbitsa area, as the other 17 were exhausted or the seam was lost.
2. 2 brickyards, a cement factory, & the large thermal electric station were built between 1951-55 at great expense - at full capacity the TES will require a large part of Vorbitsa coal production. The foundations for the turbine halls, which are about 50 m. high, ~~were~~ were driven down 80 m., partly in rock.

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The purpose of similar buildings.

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this oversized TES was not clear. Possibilities were mentioned of ~~softening~~
other industrial areas, thermal experiments in the area, creation of large amounts of energy for ~~nuclear~~
research. The plant has to be ~~run~~
run by heat as suitable water power is not available & the wind is not dependable & of hurricane velocity.

3. Shaft 7, one of the best producers, loaded an average of 25 4-axle cars (60 tons each), i.e. 1,500 tons of coal, in 24 hours. An annual output of about 500,000 tons would appear correct from these figures. Caloric content of the coal is low - it's very young bituminous coal, almost lignite in some shafts. Technical equipment is good from both production & safety viewpoints.

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[redacted] The equipment equalled the German, the safety equipment was better than the German, but the effect was less, since [redacted]
working discipline & respect for

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one's own + others' lives were less.

4. In 1952 50% of the Vorbitsa population was prisoners, + 20% exiles. About 30 camps in the area contained a total of 100,000 prisoners. In 1955 the number had dropped considerably, as about 50% of the prisoners had been arrested or released to live compulsorily in the Vorbitsa area. Those who left the area were replaced by Ukrainians, ~~or~~ discharged soldiers, or Komsomols. Population of Vorbitsa + other cities in the area had increased a good deal. The population of the Vorbitsa area in 1955 was said to be 120,000.

5. Changes in political climate ~~started~~ started with Stalins death + continued after the shooting of Banya + Abakumov. Signs of a change were amnesty of minors, and political prisoners willing to work, religious tolerance, transfer of

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the mines from the MVD to the Railroad Ministry, & improving conditions to compare with those of free workers. Rest homes, holiday or unpaid official holiday, better stock in the camp stores, increased issuance of permits to reliable prisoners to visit outlying areas without escort, bank accounts for prisoners, permission to order unavailable items by mail with corresponding reduction of accounts. Other signs are ~~increased~~ allowances to farmers to retain ^{more} their own produce (noticed in greater sale of food by farmers in railroad stations), & better treatment of foreigners (permission to write).

Prison food was inadequate because the officials administering it stole too much. All prisoners had to perform a remunerative labor in order to purchase necessary food.

Climate is polar - 9 months winter, 2 months spring & autumn, & 2 months July & August summer. The ground thaws to 2 meters in spring - summer.

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Below that is 2 - 8 meters of permafrost. Winter characterized by extreme cold + heavy snow + fog. Last 2 years snow + ~~cold~~ cold decreased. Winter 54-55 December January temperatures of -12° to -1° . Unheard of among natives of the area.

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